



state senator
Pat Miller
2005 LEGISLATIVE UPDATE
Indiana Senate
200 W. Washington St.
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Prst Std
U.S. Postage
PAID
Indianapolis, IN
Permit No. 7767



state senator
Pat Miller
serving district 32
200 W. WASHINGTON ST., INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA 46204 • WWW.IN.GOV/S32

2005 LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

INSIDE THIS ISSUE: • voter id • rx for hoosiers • cloning • fighting meth

The State Budget:
Holding the Line on Spending

BALANCED BUDGET

The Indiana General Assembly has passed a balanced two-year state budget that holds the line on spending, eliminates the structural deficit, adds no new state taxes, provides \$4 billion in property tax replacement credits and adds \$112.4 million to K-12 education.

Senate Republicans voted to control state spending while boosting funding for K-12 education, scholarships for higher education and child protection. Medicaid funding is held to a 5 percent increase. This is in contrast to the 10 percent growth experienced during the current biennium.

The passage of this budget is quite an accomplishment. To overcome a \$600 million structural deficit and end up with reserves – all without new state taxes – is no small feat.

Education funding remained a top priority. The school funding formula is driven by an innovative approach that funds children as individuals instead of simply funding school corporations. Special factors, such as poverty, single parent families and free lunches, are taken into consideration when determining the level of funding that is to follow a child.

The General Assembly continually has increased education spending in past years, even when other states were cutting education. In 2003, Indiana had the highest

increase of K-12 funding in the country – during a national recession. The new budget gives more money and more funding options to Indiana public schools than have ever been given in the history of the state.

Additionally, the state is distributing to local governments \$4 billion in property tax replacement credits, in an effort to provide relief to homeowners and other property taxpayers. Local governments and schools keep 99.9 percent of all property taxes. Half of all revenue raised by the state sales tax is used for Property Tax Replacement Credits, as is 14 percent of the income tax and nearly a half billion dollars every year from the gambling tax.

Earlier in the session, the Senate passed a measure to reform the property tax system by giving local governments an option to shift the property tax burden to an income tax in order to be more fair and equitable to Hoosiers. The initiative was successful in the Senate but failed to receive consideration in the House of Representatives, when the bill met substantial opposition from local government officials.

The new budget is a prescription for positive change in Indiana. It is the first balanced budget in 10 years. I strongly support efforts to keep spending down while providing adequate funding for essential services.

New Laws Help
Protect Children

All too often, I open my newspaper and read a story of another child being victimized. These situations have become almost commonplace in the last few years. Children are our most precious responsibility and should receive special attention from the state. The General Assembly passed several bills this session to protect Hoosier children.



In 2003, the state's sex and violent offender registry was modernized, including the requirement of a photograph of the offender that could be viewed by the public. Currently, thousands of people who have committed sex crimes or crimes against children are registered with the state. We passed two bills that will enhance the effectiveness of the registry by adding the possession of child pornography to the 14 existing offenses and by allowing neighborhood associations to receive semi-annual updates of the list.

This session, legislation passed for the reorganization the Office of the Family and Social Services Administration, which has been plagued by poor management and other problems. The law creates the Department of Child Services to handle child support, child protection, adoption and foster care services. Some Hoosier children are at risk for abuse and neglect, and these children deserve proper attention from the state.

In the state budget, we provided additional funding for child protection. The budget funds the new Department of Child Services and provides money for Independent Living assistance for persons moving off of foster care. It funds an additional 400 caseworkers for child protection and establishes caseload standards for child protection workers.

The General Assembly will continue to be vigilant in seeking ways to protect our children.

Rx FOR INDIANA

IMPROVING ACCESS TO PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

The new program “Rx for Indiana” is a pharmaceutical patient assistance program that allows lower-income Hoosiers to receive the prescription drugs they need for free or at significantly reduced prices. Since the beginning of the program in early March, more than 37,000 Indiana residents have qualified for the program.

Nearly 60 health care, business, community and consumer groups have joined the governor to help improve Indiana citizens’ access to prescription medicine. The Rx for Indiana program was developed to build upon the success of other national programs, as it links patients with information about pharmaceutical assistance programs provided by companies and the state and federal government.

Rx for Indiana provides residents access to information about more than 275 public and private prescription assistance programs that provide more than 1,800 medications. In order to take part in the program, Indiana residents must answer a few short questions to verify eligibility. The resident will then be informed of the pharmaceutical patient assistance programs for which he or she qualifies.

Rx for Indiana can save individuals thousands of dollars per year. Before the establishment of Rx for Indiana, only about one in 10 Hoosiers were taking advantage of the reduced cost medicines available. We hope that with the creation of this program, many more Hoosiers will be able to access the medications they need.

To apply for the Rx for Indiana program, visit www.rxforindiana.com or call toll-free 1-877-793-0765.

stay connected
to the
indiana senate



Visit my web site at www.in.gov/S32 where you can read my latest news releases, research bills, and learn more about Indiana laws.

During the legislative session, you can click on our [live video](#) link to watch the Senate in session.

For other information about the Indiana General Assembly, visit www.in.gov/legislative



Above: Sen. Miller speaks to the full Senate

Secure Social Security

Identity theft has become a crisis in the United States in the past several years. As of September 2003, 27.3 million Americans had been victims of identity theft, with more than 9 million of those occurring in 2003. The cases of identity theft in that year cost businesses and financial institutions \$48 billion, and cost consumers \$5 million in out-of-pocket losses.

I authored a bill this session that prohibits the BMV from placing a Social Security number on your driver's license or ID card without your authorization.

Another bill makes a Class A felony for a state agency that discloses a Social Security number without written consent.

This legislation is a positive precautionary measure that will help decrease the instances of identity theft in Indiana.

Fighting Meth

Methamphetamine production has become widespread in our state, and this year the legislature has proven its commitment to curbing this criminal activity.

In 2003, Indiana law enforcement seized 422 meth labs, more than any other Midwestern state.

All of the ingredients needed to manufacture meth can be purchased legally and are inexpensive. An investment of \$1,000 in easily purchased ingredients can produce \$20,000 worth of methamphetamine.

This year, we passed a bill to regulate the sale and purchase of meth precursors in an effort to reduce production in Indiana. The legislation includes measures designed to stop the production of meth by placing restrictions on the sale and purchase of drugs containing ephedrine or pseudoephedrine, commonly found in over-the-counter cold and allergy medicines.

Retailers must store such drugs in a locked display case or behind a counter that requires employee assistance.

Customers purchasing these drugs must present identification and record their identifying information in a log book provided and maintained by the retailer.

The bill bars retailers from selling the drugs to individuals under 18. It also prevents customers from purchasing more than 3 grams of such drugs in a week.

Rooting Out Voter Fraud

Voting in a fair and credible election is at the heart of American citizenship. It is the Legislature's responsibility to adopt policies that protect our representative democracy by ensuring each vote cast is valid and legal. Every eligible voter has the right to vote.

A group of Senate bills were introduced this year to update outmoded election laws, reinforce the integrity of voting absentee and strengthen voters' rights at the polls.

Citizens will be required to show government-issued photo identification at the polls before voting. Photo IDs are required for many commonplace circumstances that Americans face every day, like renting a video or obtaining a library card.

Many voters are surprised to learn they are not currently required to show some form of identification at the polls.

Years ago, poll workers knew the people in their precinct and had no reason to question someone's identity. Now, it is increasingly

common for Election Day volunteers to not know the voters personally. The voter ID bill gives poll workers a tool to verify a person's identity. Considering recent nationwide voting problems, and some within Indiana, this is a common-sense step to help prevent fraud.

The Bureau of Motor Vehicles has agreed to grant photo IDs free of charge to those who cannot pay. Residents of state-licensed nursing homes are exempt from showing identification if the polling place is located inside the facility in which they live. The bill also protects the rights of those who have a religious objection to being photographed.

Voters who show up at the polls without identification will be able to fill out a provisional ballot. The bill also requires the state of Indiana to mail out notices informing Hoosiers of the new requirements before the next election.

This change in the law will help prevent voter fraud.

Cloning Bill Guards Ethical Boundaries

An ethicist testified that the most agreed-to position on the globe is the opposition to the cloning of human beings. I was successful in passing a bill that bans cloning of human beings, sets guidelines for stem cell research, and expands adult stem cell research in Indiana.

My bill sends a clear message regarding appropriate experimentation and the sanctity of human life. While the legislation bans the cloning of human beings it allows cloning of organs.

The bill declares that human cloning is against public policy in Indiana. The bill makes it clear that a violation of these regulations would result in a Class D felony. This initiative prohibits the state from using resources to participate in human cloning. It also requires the

State Board of Health to revoke the license of a physician who participates in human cloning.

The bill establishes the Adult Stem Cell Research Center under the direction of Indiana University Medical School. I was successful in securing \$50,000 in the state budget for start-up costs.

The State Department of Health is required to report to the Legislative Council on establishing an embryo adoption bank in Indiana.

It is important to allow research to explore new methods of curing illnesses while staying within the confines of what is morally ethical. This bill gives the tools to keep up with cutting edge technology and remain one of the leading institutions for medical research.

Bill Briefs

One bill requires state government to fuel state vehicles with agriculture-based fuels, such as biodiesel, ethanol, or gasohol, whenever possible. Biodiesel is a clean burning alternative fuel, produced from domestic, renewable resources, such as soybeans. Biodiesel contains no petroleum, but it can be blended at any level with petroleum diesel. This helps improve air quality and our economy by taking advantage of resources from right here in Indiana.

PASSED. My vote: YES

Currently, state law requires children to be five years old on July 1 of a school year to be eligible to attend kindergarten. This year, the General Assembly moved the kindergarten enrollment date to include children who turn five years old no later than August 1 of the 2006-2007 school year. While state law does not require parents to enroll children who may not be ready for kindergarten, children who turn five during the summer months are welcome in our schools.

PASSED. My vote: YES

EXPANDING

Convention center growth and a new stadium should boost central Indiana's economy.

This year, the legislature worked extensively to help develop and pass the plan to fund a new stadium and expand the convention center. The centerpiece for a funding mechanism is a 1 percent food and beverage tax on Marion County and the seven "doughnut" counties. Marion and Johnson Counties stand to benefit from the project.

All of the money raised in Marion County (approximately \$17 million) will go toward the stadium and convention center projects. The amount the doughnut counties contribute to the projects is capped at \$5 million. Johnson County will contribute about \$225,000 and keep about \$225,000. Those counties will keep at least half of the revenue raised.

- Presently, Marion County benefits from a combined total of over \$165 million in sales just as the host of the Colts and NCAA headquarters.
- The convention center currently adds \$361 million in sales.
- In Marion County, the Colts contribute \$1.9 million in taxes to the Capital Improvement Board and another \$710,000 in income tax.
- A study conducted by PricewaterhouseCoopers in 2004 estimated that the convention center and stadium contribute over \$22 million dollars in sales, income and gasoline tax to the state.

The numbers discussed so far just involve the current contribution the stadium and convention center makes to the region. When expanded, the region can expect to collect an additional \$610 million in sales and income tax as well as the addition of another 5,500 jobs.

Changes Make Indiana Open for Business

This year, lawmakers faced the difficult task of pulling Indiana out of a fiscal crisis. While much of that was done in the crafting of the two-year budget, the only permanent way to ensure financial stability is by creating more jobs and putting more money in the pockets of Hoosiers.

To create economic development, the General Assembly combined ideas from the governor with plans from both the Senate and the House of Representatives.

The legislation contain dozens of provisions that make the state more attractive to companies looking to relocate, existing businesses wishing to expand and entrepreneurs looking for an incentive to start a business.



One of the most important ideas was a sales tax break for research and development equipment. This will encourage high-tech, innovative jobs that help improve a state's well-being and reputation. Following the governor's lead, the General Assembly also took particular interest in the motor racing industry which includes provisions exempting professional motor racing parts from sales tax and adding "professional motor vehicle racing" to the list of businesses that qualify for the Venture Capital Investment Tax Credit. The

I authored a bill this session that allows a person's documented blood type information to be on the person's driver's license, driver's permit, or identification card at the request of the person. When having a medical emergency, time can mean the difference between life and death. By placing this designation on your license, medical professionals can begin treatment even sooner. Individuals are responsible for the accuracy of the information placed on the license.

PASSED. My vote: YES

Another bill recently signed into law by the governor creates a panel of experts to develop a medical information system for Indiana. Such a system can markedly improve quality of care and has the potential to save up to 30 percent on medical costs. At a time when medical costs are skyrocketing, this is something that could benefit not only our personal health, but also our economic health.

PASSED. My vote: YES

In 2004, newspaper readers across the state saw an extraordinary number of headlines revealing corruption in state government. In response, the General Assembly passed a bill this session establishing the position of inspector general, an employee of the state, who works to weed out corruption. Years of scandal in previous administrations cost the state at least \$25 million; we may never know the full extent of misspending.

PASSED. My vote: YES



LEFT: Sen. Miller reads and responds to a constituent letter. As chairman of the Senate Health and Provider Services Committee, Sen. Miller receives hundreds of phone calls and letters each session.

A new stadium serves as a venue for many other activities that bring millions of dollars to the region. Last year, more than 1.3 million people visited the stadium for entertainment activities of all kinds including NCAA basketball. The proposed stadium helps keep the NCAA in the state until 2039. This important event contributes \$63.3 million annually and another \$85 million per five-year cycle for events related to March Madness.

As far as conventions are concerned, the Indiana Convention Center has attracted several big-name conventions over the years, but these groups have been growing. Three top conventions have left town, and a few more are shopping around. One of the conventions that has left, the Performance Racing Industry (PRI), brought \$26 million in direct spending every year. That is the equivalent spending amount of one Final Four weekend. While the Final Four comes to Indy once in a while, PRI conventioners were spending their dollars here every year.

Central Indiana needs these initiatives to bring valuable dollars to the city and state.

measure also makes it easier to qualify for credits such as Hoosier Business Investment Tax Credits.

To further develop agriculture, the legislature created the Indiana State Department of Agriculture and consolidated duties that were once scattered across numerous agencies. The move costs Indiana taxpayers no additional money. In fact, we anticipate that it actually saves money by merging the 10 separate agriculture boards and commissions into one large department. Legislation that will encourage the use of our soybean and corn crops in the production of alternative fuels also passed.

In other bills, the General Assembly enabled communities to be "shovel-ready" for property development, allowing farmers to switch to more lucrative operations and streamlined the Indiana Economic Development Corporation, which will be responsible for recruiting outside business.

The 2005 session of the General Assembly may be remembered as one of the most important and aggressive sessions ever for making Indiana open for business.